

From the Beginning

By Joquita Burka

It was part of a Puritan plan. Settlers from Dorchester, MA, would settle in an arc around the already thriving city of Charleston, SC. Though Native American tribes had long been in the area, Dorchester, SC, saw its first European settlers in 1696; near-by Summerville in the late 1700s. The area, just upland from the

Independence, laid out a beautiful rice plantation and the oldest landscaped gardens in the country.

It is this colorful and varied past that the Summerville-Dorchester Museum breathes to life in its exhibits which include paleontology, Colonial antebellum living, Victorian traditions and 20th-cen-

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coastal plantations, was regarded as a summer resort for rice planters. In time, the area became a year-round resort with a railroad connecting it with Charleston and the upcountry. It seems that the pine scent of the surrounding forests was viewed as particularly healthy. Folks came to hunt, sip tea on the verandahs and enjoy numerous "spa" treatments. The Victorian penchant for elegant dress, languid activities and elaborate parties made the Dorchester/Summerville area a most picturesque respite.

Henry Middleton chose to live in the area year-round on his rice plantation—Middleton Place. Here, Henry, president of the Continental Congress and his son, Arthur, a signer of the Declaration of

tury life, as well as seasonal traveling exhibitions.

Housed in a building that originally served as the Summerville lumber company, the museum will give you a peek into daily life. A look—not so much into the big world events of the past—but into the everyday lives of the people who walked the very same piece of earth that you are walking. The kind of look that helps us better understand the people and places that made New World truly "new."

Find out more...

Summerville-Dorchester
Museum
843-875-9666

